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Short Note

A new locality of an invasive Gecko, *Cyrtopodion scabrum* (Heyden,1827) in Algeria (Squamata: Gekkonidae)

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ABSTRACT

The Rough Bent-toed Gecko *Cyrtopodion scabrum* (Heyden,1827) was recently recorded in Algeria, from the east part of countries. In this note, another new locality of this species in the central Algeria (Ghardaïa region), situated at 450 km west form the last locality, based on one specimen fond in Bord of Sebkhet. *C. scabrum* is listed as an invasive species and it was reported as a desert species, in our finding it was recorded in an important wetland (Sebkhet El Melah) which is classified in the Ramsar list in 2004, this statement proves once again the ecological plasticity of this species.

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1. Introduction

The rough bent-toed gecko, *Cyrtopodion scabrum* (Heyden 1827), is a small lizard originally from the Middle East and northeast of North Africa [1]. Despite, *C. scabrum*, is the most widely distributed species in its genus [2], it was more introduced in other countries outside of its native geographical range [3,4].

As it is considered as an invasive species, *C. scabrum* is generally expanding its population size and its distribution range [1], to reach Algeria countries very far from native region in Middle east and south-west Asia [1,5].

Our finding provides another new locality of this species in the central Algeria (Ghardaïa region), situated at 450 km west form the last locality in the east part of countries [5]. This new locality is a great wetland of Sebkhet El Melah, confirming the high ecological plasticity of this species to leave in different biotopes and different climates.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Stady area

Sebkhet El Melah (Fig. 2) wetland is located at 870 km to the south of Algiers, in the center of the Algeria (30°25'-30°32'N. and 02°54'-02°56'E.) at an altitude ranging from 330 to 397 m, with a total area of 72 000 ha [6]. It is a permanent wetland classified in the Ramsar list in 2004 [7]. It is enclosed by rocky hills and sand dunes [8]. The lake is composed of an upper fresh basin connected to a lower salt one, both are mainly supplied by drainage water, rain and sewage from the city of the same name [9]. This region is characterized by a very important plant diversity varies according to the season, with a dominance of a few botanical families such as: Poaceae with *Stipagrostis obtus*, *Polypogon monspeliensis*, Amaranthaceae represented essential by *Chenopodium mural* and *Amaranthus hybridus* [10].

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2.2.Taxonomic account

Gekkonidae Oppel 1811
Cyrtopodion Fitzinger 1843
Cyrtopodion scabrum (Heyden 1827) (Fig. 1a)

Type material. Algeria, Ghardaïa, Region of El-Goléa (El-Menia), 30°30'N., 2°59'E., in Bord of Sebkhet El Melah, 370 m, 22/X/2020 (S.E. Sadine & M. El Bouhissi), one individual. This specimen was photographed and released into the wild.

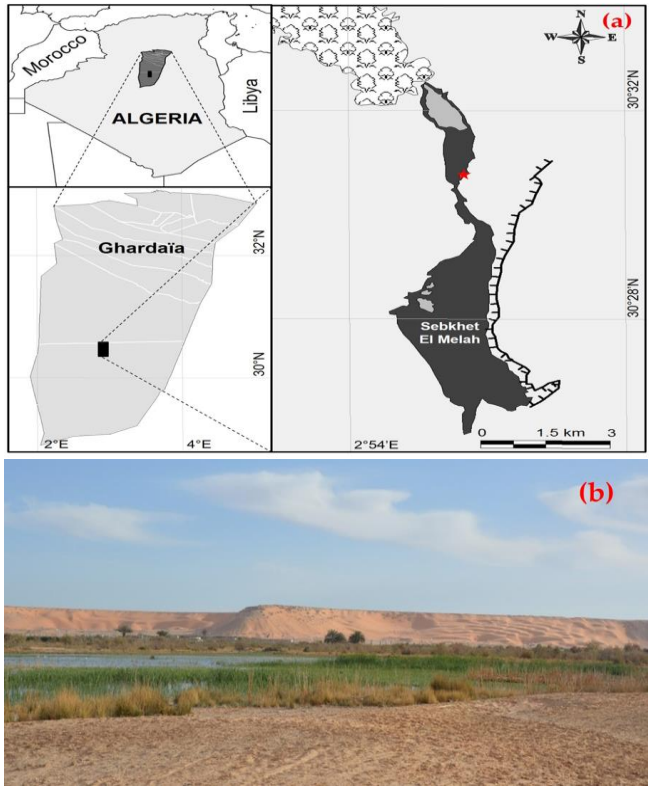

Fig 1. Location of lake Sebkhet El Melah (study area) a. general view of the lake; b. Lower basin of the lake

Fig. 2. *Cyrtopodion scabrum* in natural habitat. a: General view; b: dorsal view of the head; c: lateral view of the head

3. Ecological remarks

As noted in introduction that the rough bent-toed gecko *Cyrtopodion scabrum*, has a high ecological plasticity:

a. It is able to live in different biotopes as salt marshes [11], in urban habitats and in oases of date palm [5] and in the wetland (Current note).

b. This species preferred the dry climates and desert ecotypes [12]. Contrariwise, in this note this species was fond in a great wetland (Sebkhet El Melah) where the relative humidity varied from 20 to 60% [13]

c. Also, this species shows an independence to the altitudinal parameters, because, it was found at less than 100 m above sea level in east Algeria [5], at an altitude ranging from 330 to 397 m (Current note) and can reach to 1,800 m above sea level [1].

According to the first repartition of *C. scabrum* in the east Algeria [5] and the new locality in this note. The current distribution of this species in Algeria can be summarized in figure (3)

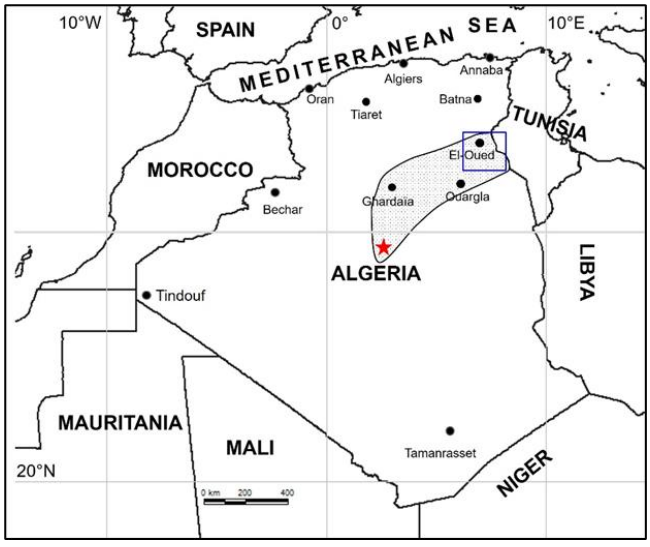

Fig. 3. Map of the present geographical distribution range of *Cyrtopodion scabrum* in Algeria (dashed area). First locality (bleu square) following Mouane et al. (2020) [5], New locality (red star).

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

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